

IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of the claim will replace all prior versions and listings of claim in the present application.

Claims 1-7 (canceled).

8. (new) A hub system to which at least one storage device and at least one contents reproducing apparatus can be electrically connected, said hub system comprising:

a hub apparatus to which said at least one storage device and said at least one contents reproducing apparatus can be electrically connected; and

a key storing apparatus, electrically connected to said hub apparatus, for storing therein keys, each being used to decode encrypted contents data,

wherein said key storing apparatus comprises:

store means for storing said keys,

authentication means for authenticating said at least one contents reproducing apparatus and said at least one storage device which are electrically connected thereto,

means for transmitting a key in said store means to said at least one contents reproducing apparatus as a partner of communication by utilizing cipher communication if said at least one contents reproducing apparatus to which the key is transmitted is authenticated as the partner of communication by said authentication means, and

means for reading out a key from said store means, transmitting the key thus read to a storage device as a partner of communication by utilizing cipher

communication, and deleting from said store means the key thus read, if said storage device to which the key thus read is transmitted is authenticated as the partner of communication by said authentication means.

9. (new) A hub system according to claim 8, wherein said key storing apparatus is removably attached to said hub apparatus.

10. (new) A controller which is electrically connected to a hub system comprising:

acquisition means for acquiring information from various kinds of apparatuses and devices which are electrically connected to said hub system;

selection means, electrically connected to said acquisition means, for selecting a contents reproducing apparatus to be used to reproduce contents from among said various kinds of apparatuses and devices which are electrically connected to said hub system by utilizing the information acquired by said acquisition means;

means, electrically connected to said acquisition means, for retrieving contents data from a contents storing device in which encrypted contents data of the contents to be reproduced is stored by utilizing the information acquired by said equipment means, said contents storing device being among said various kinds of apparatuses and devices which are electrically connected to said hub apparatus;

means, electrically connected to said acquisition means, for retrieving a key from a key storing apparatus by utilizing the information acquired by said

acquisition means, said key being used to decode said contents data, said key storing apparatus being among said various kinds of apparatuses and devices which are electrically connected to said hub apparatus; and

means for transmitting an instruction to reproduce said contents to be reproduced to said contents reproducing apparatus which is selected by said selection means.

11. (new) A controller according to claim 10, further comprising:

means for transmitting an instruction to move said key which is used to decode, to said key storing apparatus, in which said key being used to decode said contents data, is stored.

12. (new) A hub system according to claim 9, further comprising:

acquisition means for acquiring information from various kinds of apparatuses and devices which are electrically connected to said hub system;

selection means, electrically connected to said acquisition means, for selecting a contents reproducing apparatus to be used to reproduce contents from among said various kinds of apparatuses and devices which are electrically connected to said hub system by utilizing the information acquired by said acquisition means;

means, electrically connected to said acquisition means, for retrieving contents data from a contents storing device in which encrypted contents data of the contents to be reproduced is stored by utilizing the information acquired by said

equipment means, said contents storing device being among said various kinds of apparatuses and devices which are electrically connected to said hub apparatus;

means, electrically connected to said acquirement means, for retrieving a key from a key storing apparatus by utilizing the information acquired by said acquirement means, said key being used to decode said contents data, said key storing apparatus being among said various kinds of apparatuses and devices which are electrically connected to said hub apparatus; and

means for transmitting an instruction to reproduce said contents to be reproduced to said contents reproducing apparatus which is selected by said selection means.

13. (new) A contents reproducing system which manages encrypted contents data and a key used to decode said encrypted contents data, said contents reproducing system comprising:

a hub apparatus;

a controller electrically connected to said hub apparatus;

a contents storing device which is electrically connected to said hub apparatus;

a contents reproducing apparatus which is electrically connected to said hub apparatus; and

a key storing apparatus, electrically connected to said hub apparatus, for storing therein keys each being used to decode encrypted contents data,

wherein said key storing apparatus comprises:

store means for storing said keys,

authentication means for authenticating said contents reproducing apparatus and said contents storing device which are electrically connected thereto;

means for transmitting a key in said store means to said contents reproducing apparatus as a partner of communication by utilizing cipher communication, if said contents reproducing apparatus to which the key is transmitted is authenticated as the partner of communication by said authentication means, and

means for reading out a key from said store means, transmitting the key thus read to said contents storing device as a partner of communication by utilizing cipher communication, and deleting from said store means the key thus read, if said contents storing device to which the key thus read is transmitted is authenticated as the partner of communication by said authentication means;

wherein said controller comprises:

acquisition means for acquiring information as to apparatus and device from various kinds of apparatuses and devices which are electrically connected to said hub apparatus,

selection means electrically connected to said acquisition means, for selecting a contents reproducing apparatus to be used to reproduce contents, from among said various kinds of apparatuses and devices which are electrically connected to said hub apparatus, by utilizing the information as to apparatus and device acquired by said acquisition means;

means, electrically connected to said acquisition means, for retrieving a contents storing device in which encrypted contents data of contents to be

reproduced is stored, from among said various kinds of apparatuses and devices which are electrically connected to said hub apparatus, by utilizing the information as to apparatus and device acquired by said acquirement means;

means, electrically connected to said acquirement means, for retrieving a key storing apparatus in which a key which is used to decode said contents data is stored, from among said various kinds of apparatuses and devices which are electrically connected to said hub apparatus, by utilizing the information as to the apparatus and device acquired by said acquirement means; and

means for transmitting an instruction to reproduce said contents to be reproduced to said contents reproducing apparatus which is selected by said selection means.

14. (new) A contents reproducing system according to claim 13, further comprising:

means for retrieving, from said contents reproducing system, encrypted contents data to be moved and a key for decoding the contents data to be moved, which are separately stored in discrete contents storing devices, respectively, to reproduce or move them thus retrieved, when the contents to be moved is specified.